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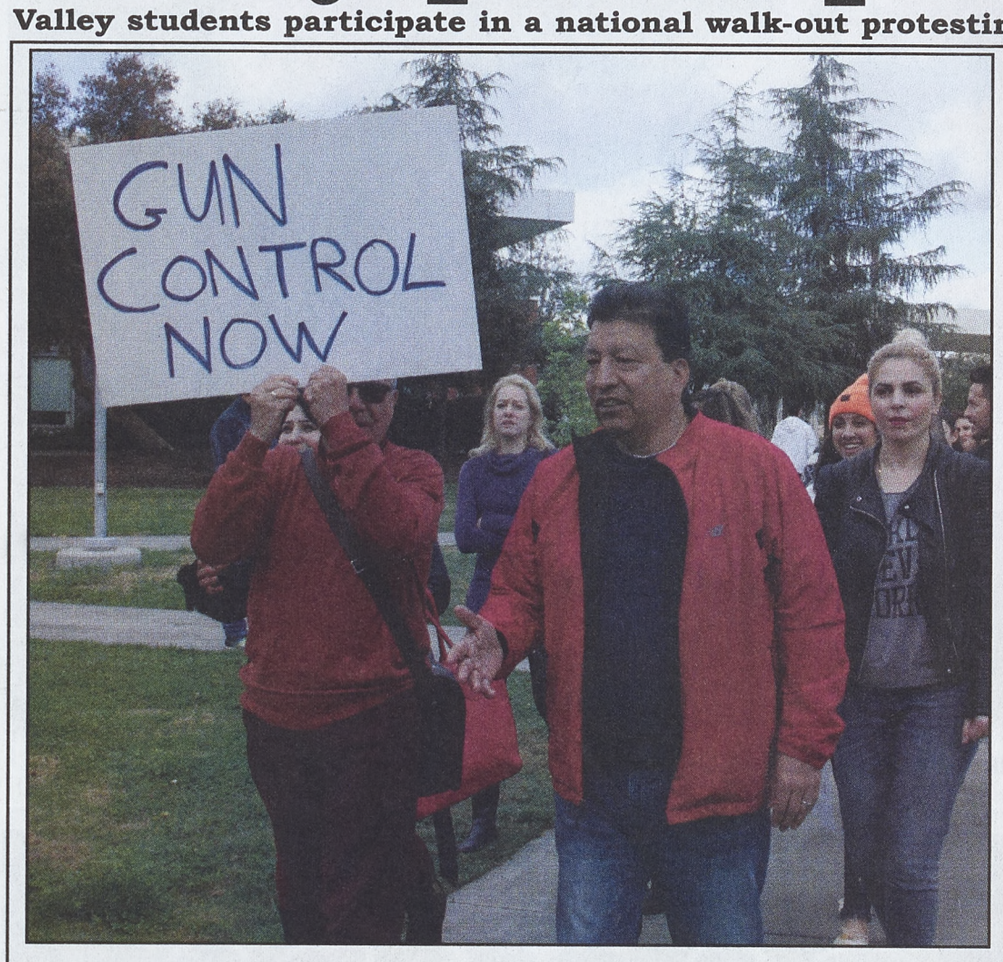
Valley participates in walkout

Valley students participate in a national walk-out protesting lawmakers' failure to act on gun violence.



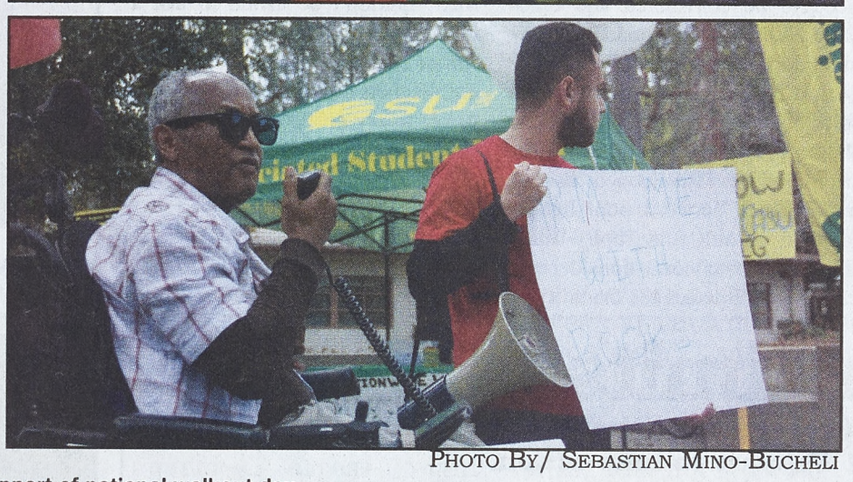


PHOTO BY/ SEBASTIAN MINO-BUCHELI

PROTESTERS--Students and faculty gathered in the quad near Monarch Hall and held signs in support of national walkout day.

BY SOLOMON SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHEIF

A national student walk-out took place on Wednesday across the nation as students left their classrooms in protest of Congress' lack of action on gun violence in American schools.

Organized under the banner of Empower, a youth program under the Women's March, urged students, teachers, and other to walk out of their classes at 10 a.m for 17 minutes. Each minute represented one of the 17 victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting victims that occurred one month ago, February 14.

Jaredd Franco, the ASU's Communications and social media commissioner, led and organized the event.

"A lot of faculty have been supportive," said Franco, "we've sent out mass emails to all faculty and staff letting them know to encourage their students to join this movement."

The movement spread quickly through Facebook and Twitter as #Enough! The National School Walkout called on students to demonstrate their frustrations with Congress' lack of action on gun control.

Not everyone supported the event, however. Some high schools threatened to punish students who participated. In Texas, the Needville Independent School District issued a warning that participating students would be suspended for three days if they walked out.

"We will discipline no matter if it is one, 50, or five hundred students involved. All will be suspended for three days and parents' notes will not alleviate the discipline," said Curtis Rhodes, the superintendent, on the Needville High School Facebook page.

Vice President of Student Services Florentino Manzano gave the ASU permission to use the free speech area for the walkout, according to an ASU office staff member. President Erika Endrijonas attended the event, taking photos but did not address the crowd.

"This was [a] student-run event and I didn't want to interfere in the students' space," Endrijonas said. "It wasn't my place to speak or participate."

Several students spoke at the rally sharing their frustrations about the lack of action on gun control, some shared their stories.

"Stop killing each other! Let's work together and get the whole LACCD together. I survived [a] bullet [to] the head, also I'm advocating gun control," said William Craig.

Craig, who is confined to a motorized wheelchair, gave an impassioned speech about the need for gun control and is also a member of the Ability club.

In addition to the 17-minute walkout, the American Federation of teachers organized a second protest led by student workers Kimberly Blanco and Danny Martinez. The second event took place starting at Valley College and continued to Van Nuys City Hall, approximately a 45-minute walk.

"Were part of a bigger organization that's the California Federation of teachers, and that would include k-12. It's sort of student run, and I am supporting them, but the students have put this together," said Ruby Christian-Brougham, head of the local AFT.

They were joined by students and faculty from Pierce and Mission colleges, according to Broughm.

Standing in front of approximately 100 students, activists Sarahi Flores gave an impassioned speech regarding students ability to affect change.

"We already saw the Las Vegas shooting and we didn't see any changes after that," Flores said. "We have power by using our voices."

JESSICA LANGE, SARAH BENNETT, AND JOHN HERNANDEZ CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT.

Valley College planning active shooter drills

Valley increases security and prepares students and faculty for an active shooter.

BY JESSICA AVA LANGE
STAFF WRITER

In light of the recent Florida school shooting and the national conversation on school safety, Valley College has increased its security patrol and is updating their active shooter policy by preparing an active shooter drill on campus this month.

Each classroom is outfitted with an emergency procedures manual, usually found near the door. The procedures explain how to handle a number of emergencies, which includes an active shooter.

In the event of an active shooter, take action and protect yourself by hiding in a safe place and lock down in a room. "If you hear what might be gunshots assume that there is a shooter on campus until Sheriff's personnel, police, or campus administration tells you otherwise," according to the manual. In addition, students and faculty are notified of any emergency through Blackboard Connect, the campus emergency notification system that will send emergency alert notifications via email, voice, and text message.

Valley has decided to do more by participating in an active shooter drill with a triage of different agencies and students playing the role of victims. The campus will conduct four different active shooter drills over different days and times in order to involve all students.

"Basically what it does is simulates an actual active shooter. We'll have students that will be in the role of being victims," said Sgt. Harry Van, leader in LACCD's emergency preparedness efforts. "We'll have outside agencies and law enforcement involved, besides the Sheriff's department and fire department. We'll have a whole triage with victims and handle it as such."

Campus officials have bolstered their security on campus, but declined to release the number of security guards on campus. "We've added some heightened awareness to our security officers who continue to be vigilant on campus," said Sarah Song, associate vice president of administrative services and campus emergency preparedness coordinator. "It takes a whole campus community to be able to ensure security on campus."

The campus website features a video detailing the active shooter emergency procedures. The video explains the basics of what to do: run, hide, and fight.

Valley conducts a lot of training and drills, because they want people to be as familiar with the active shooter procedures as any other emergency. The biggest concern for the leaders in emergency preparedness efforts is student participation.

"We hope that everyone doesn't take it lightly," said Song. "And everyone participates even though they know that it's a drill, so we can bring more awareness to students, faculty, and staff."

Valley has added to its policy, but arming teachers is something they don't endorse.

"We have some general concerns. What if the teachers become a threat to the students? Then what are we going to do?" said Song. "Anyone who has a weapon, you would have a concern. But it's not really our place to speak to that."

PHOTO / PETA PIXEL

DRILL- Stock image of officers training for active shooter scenario.

Students explore careers with job shadow program

Valley College is hosting a program that allows students to explore the career of their choice by meeting with professionals in the field.

BY GABRIEL ARIZON
STAFF WRITER

Valley College students searching for a way to research a career can participate in this year's Job Shadow Program.

The program is a nationally sponsored event that is being coordinated on campus by the LAVC Career/Transfer Center. Students are given the chance to explore the career of their choice by meeting with a professional within that field. Students who meet with these professionals are also able to ask specific questions about their careers and their experiences. Through the program, students can obtain valuable information about a potential occupation, such as the challenges and specific demands of that profession.

"It's a tool to find out what people do, to get their point of view for career exploration purposes only,"

-Petrini.

"You may actually be seated next to your professional in their job environment, or it's gonna be here and they bring the environment to you," said Career and Technical Education Counselor, Chris Petrini.

Participants in the program may select up to three careers to shadow and from those selections, one professional is matched with the student.

Once a day has been agreed upon for the meeting, the student has from an hour to half a day to spend with their professional. There are some caveats, however.

"It's a tool to find out what people do, to get their point of view for career exploration purposes only," said Petrini. "It's not a place to ask for a job."

Additionally, those who participate in the program will not receive any pay or academic credit. To participate in the program, applicants must have attended one of the three orientation sessions at the Career/Transfer Center.

"I thought it was a great idea to get some insight into a career I'm possibly interested in," said Valley student, Christan Aprahamian.

"I think it's a great to learn about different careers, and you might have questions that you need someone to answer."

OPINION

Line needs to be drawn between flirting and assault

OPINION BY
JESSICA LANGE
STAFF WRITER

Rape is a crime, but there is a significant difference between unwanted or offensive sexual advances and awkwardly asking a woman for her number.

According to a recent survey by The Economist, "Twenty-five percent of millennial-aged men think that asking a woman out for a drink constitutes sexual harassment," and "more than a third of millennial men and women say that if a man compliments a woman's looks it is harassment."

If that were sexual harassment then an unsolicited kiss would be considered rape. Quite frankly, I am a proud feminist but I still believe that women should be courted and pursued with boundaries.

We don't want men to be afraid to approach women. How else would romance play into a modern-day courtship? As a woman, I don't see myself as helpless or powerless to men, and I have the power to say no or yes.

If a woman goes to dinner with a man and decides she doesn't like the way he speaks to the server, go home. If a woman goes home with a man and decides he's a bad kisser, leave.

Obviously, the #MeToo, #Times Up, and #Never Again Movement is long overdue and I want to see a change in society, but I don't think it's reasonable to put Al Franken on the same level as Harvey Weinstein. There are distinct differences between types of offenses.

"You know, there's a difference between, you know, patting someone on the butt and rape or child molestation, right?" said Matt Damon. "Both of those behaviors need to be confronted and eradicated without question, but they shouldn't be conflated, right?"

Matt Damon's comments led to a lot of backlash. Both a pat on the butt and rape should be eliminated and never condoned there is a difference between poor behavior and assault and rape. When innocuous behavior is considered a crime it diminishes the brutality of assault and rape.

Consider Aziz Ansari, an actor who had a sexual encounter with a woman that relied on non-verbal communication instead of telling Ansari no and then later accusing him of rape. In other words, he couldn't read her mind. It's important for woman to step into their power by saying no and for men to get verbal consent, as awkward as it may be.

All of these men, Weinstein, O'Reilly, Spacey, and Lauer, among others, deserve their consequences but part of the problem has lead to the inability men.

My heart goes out to all victims of sexual assault and rape but it's important to remember that not all men behave inappropriately. Men shouldn't be afraid to ask a woman out to the movies, to grab a cup of coffee or a drink after work and women have the power to say yes or to say no.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ALISON MCKINLEY

HARRASMENT- Female student looks displeased as a creep looks over at her phone.

Dick's sets limits on guns

The Debate on gun control continues to heat up influencing stores like Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart to take action.

OPINION BY
VICENTE VITELA
STAFF WRITER

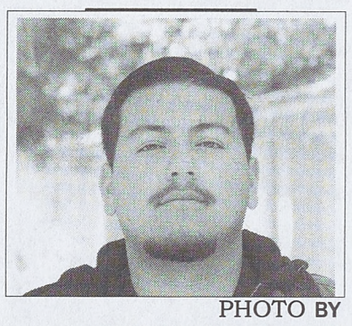


PHOTO BY
Sebastian Mino-Buchelli

Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart's decision to move the purchasing age of a firearm from 18 to 21 is a motivating choice, taking matters into their own hands, and guns out of the hands of others.

We need a plan of action that calls for stricter gun control policies. Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart are two major gun retailers that have taken the first steps towards reshaping gun control and should be praised for their choices.

Gun control has long been a focal point of national controversy, and with the recent school shooting in Florida, one needs to ask if we are taking the right steps to prevent such an incident from reoccurring. Under Federal Law, a person must be at least 21 to buy a handgun from a firearms dealer, but 18 year olds can still buy semiautomatic rifles and other firearms.

The second amendment was written over 230 years ago. I have no problem with people keeping a gun in their house to feel safe, but when mentally unstable people obtain access to a rifle without checks to their medical history or possible criminal past, I am concerned.

"When we saw what happened in Parkland, we were so disturbed and upset," said Edward Stack, Chief Executive for Dick's Sporting Goods, to The New York Times.

After Columbine in 1999, a shooting that killed 13 people, not enough was done to prevent it from happening again. After Virginia Tech in 2007, which killed 32 people, not enough was done. After Sandy Hook in 2012, that killed 27 people, not enough was done. With all these killings of innocent people whose ages range from six to 17 years-old, including the most recent shooting in Florida, the one thing that has remained constant overtime is that not enough was done to prevent another incident.

Dick's Sporting Goods is taking steps towards preventing a firearm from landing in the wrong hands. The company will no longer sell high capacity magazines and will require any gun buyer to be at least 21 years old no matter the local state law.

"In light of recent events, we've taken an opportunity to review our policy on firearm sales," said a Walmart spokesperson to USA Today.

Walmart is also trying to help limit gun control by not selling any firearm to anyone under 21 and will no longer be selling items that resemble assault-rifles, which includes toys and actual firearms. This is a huge step in the right direction as Walmart sells firearms in half of its supercenter stores, according to an article in The New York Times.

Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods took the first step in initiating a stricter gun control policy by raising the purchasing age of a firearm to 21 and soon after, the state of Florida passed a bill to move the purchasing age of a firearm to 21 statewide.

Congress needs to follow in the footsteps of Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart, and decide to make the necessary steps in preventing mass shootings.

This will not only help prevent incidents from happening, but it will also send a message to congress that if you won't do anything, we will.

PHOTO FROM PIXAPIXEL

#Oscars2018TooPolitical

As the Oscars become more political, the ratings continue to dive.

OPINION BY
SARAH BENNETT
STAFF WRITER

This years Academy Awards was more about politics than a ceremony honoring the extraordinary accomplishments of its nominees.

Let me start by saying I am a feminist, an advocate for minority rights, and will defend someone who is being attacked. In the midst of this madness, there comes a time where we need to rally together to combat injustice. The time however is not at an awards show where we honor the artists who have dedicated their lives to their craft.

The bandwagon people tend to get on in these situations can be detrimental to the actual cause by over amplification of their views. If an entertainment event, such as the Oscars, comes to be known as a platform for celebrities to voice their opinions on current issues, the public will turn away, and the causes they are rooting for will lose respect. Similar to campaign ads during election season, people tend to tune out after the first few ads disqualifying the opposing party.

"[The] entertainment community does run the risk of alienating some viewers with positions that they may not agree with, or feel they have become saturated with." said Valley Cinema professor, Eric Swelstad.

The Oscars used to be the event of the season, now it seems more like the DNC. Over the past couple years representation of minorities and women have been a call to arms throughout the film industry. Each nominee and winner seems to be more like a congressional nominee rallying for their election or reelection than an artist winning an award.

The idea behind using such a public stage to promote your ideals and the "ideals of hollywood" to influence America is not new. In 2015, the #oscarssowhite hashtag was promoted all over the Internet and Twitter. This movement sparked massive changes in the film industry, including tax breaks for movies and TV shows to meet a certain quota of ethnic actors. Will the proliferation of sex scandals, comments against Donald Trump and Jet Skies change the way the political system works? No.

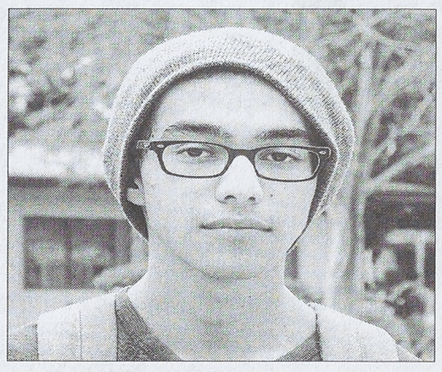
Many people we know of in Hollywood are intelligent and proactive when it comes to the rights of minorities. They establish a system where people listen and respect what they have to say. We also have a President who never stops talking, and pushes his agenda down the throats of the public as well. If Hollywood wants to distinguish itself from the very person they are rallying against, they shouldn't be doing the same things.

Let's not allow ourselves to oversimplify important issues by addressing them as if they are in season by promoting them at yearly entertainment events. Next year lets celebrate one another and what we have accomplished.

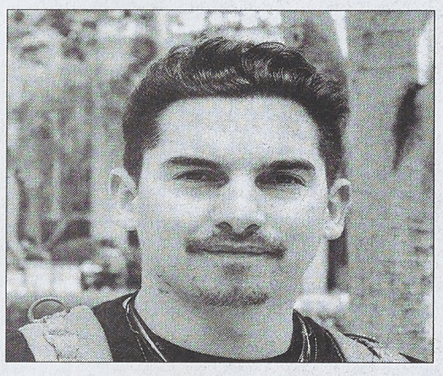
VALLEY VIEW

What do you think should be done about gun violence on school campus?

BY ERICK LOPEZ WITH PHOTOS BY ALISON MCKINLEY

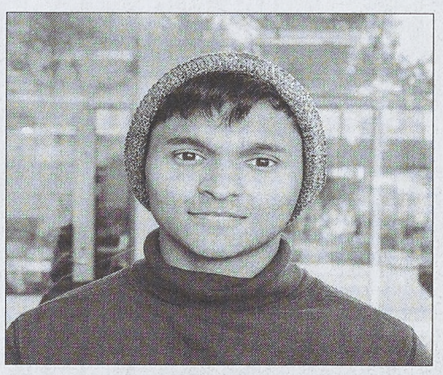


" More funding to mental health institutions. More background checks. Complete ban on all weapons. "
-Bidkar Salazar



" More exposure to gun safety programs. A millimeter is much more dangerous than a (AR-)55k."
-Levi Hinojosa

" I rarely see security around here; I guess more trained security.
-Mary Flores



"Increase in security wouldn't be a good idea."
-Taha Maksud

Students find support with Helping Hands

Valley College's Helping Hands Project connects contributors with the community to ensure student success.

BY CESAR MARITINEZ
STAFF WRITER

The Helping Hands Project at Valley College is assisting students who may be experiencing hardships with basic needs to reduce the incidences of homelessness on campus.

Founded five years ago by Valley's department staff, The Helping Hands Project and local agencies conjunctively shared resources to aid students currently in need of food, fees, toiletries, books, and transportation.

"We are trying to exhaust all of our resources," said the Helping Hands Coordinator, Emily Mutanda, on the community, "filling in the gaps for the students, so all opportunities can be offered."

Located in the CalWorks office, Helping Hands has expanded its range of services for students with a $28,000 grant given to the project. Hosting two annual fundraisers, HHP even created a food pantry in one of the rooms and providing applicants with monetary funds. Additionally, they provide other services such as free book rentals to students, food drives and several workshops for people in food insecure situations.

Students must follow the program's guideline and requirements in order to qualify for HHP. Upon referral from staff, the participant will be offered strict confidentiality and guidance for resources on-and-off campus. Aside from maintaining a 2.5 GPA each semester, participants must establish an Educational Plan with a counselor to ensure their student success.

Although California homelessness issue has been prevalent, the numbers have risen for several years. With inflation and increase in housing costs, L.A. County's homeless population sized 23 percent over last year, according to the Los Angeles Times.

In a report from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, "California had 97,660 homeless individuals, which accounted for 28 percent of the nation's population."

PHOTO BY/ PEXEL

HELPING STUDENTS- Valley College faculty and staff come together to lend a hand to students in need.

In spite of Valley's lack of housing options, Helping Hands, local agencies and programs such as LA Family Housing, Hope of the Valley, CalFresh, Food Forward and Vena Elementary School, came together to provide proper necessities for students' needs to survive prior upon entering the classroom.

Among the local contributors, Food Forward volunteers rescue "300,000 pounds of surplus produce each week" from 23 total markets they glean from, according to an email from Farmers Market Recovery Program Manager, Jason Reedy.

"One-hundred percent of these fresh fruits and vegetables are donated to over 300 hunger relief agencies across eight counties in Southern California" said Reedy.

Along with other L.A. County collaborators supporting the efforts to tackle homelessness, the Valley community are safe to stay in school.

"Homelessness is an overwhelming issue which leaves you thinking 'where do you start?'" said Emily Matunda. "With the momentum gained from Helping Hands, the ball is rolling and not stopping."

Hollywood stars call for diversity at Oscars

The 2018 Oscars highlighted inclusion, diversity, and empowerment within Hollywood may signal a change in the industry.

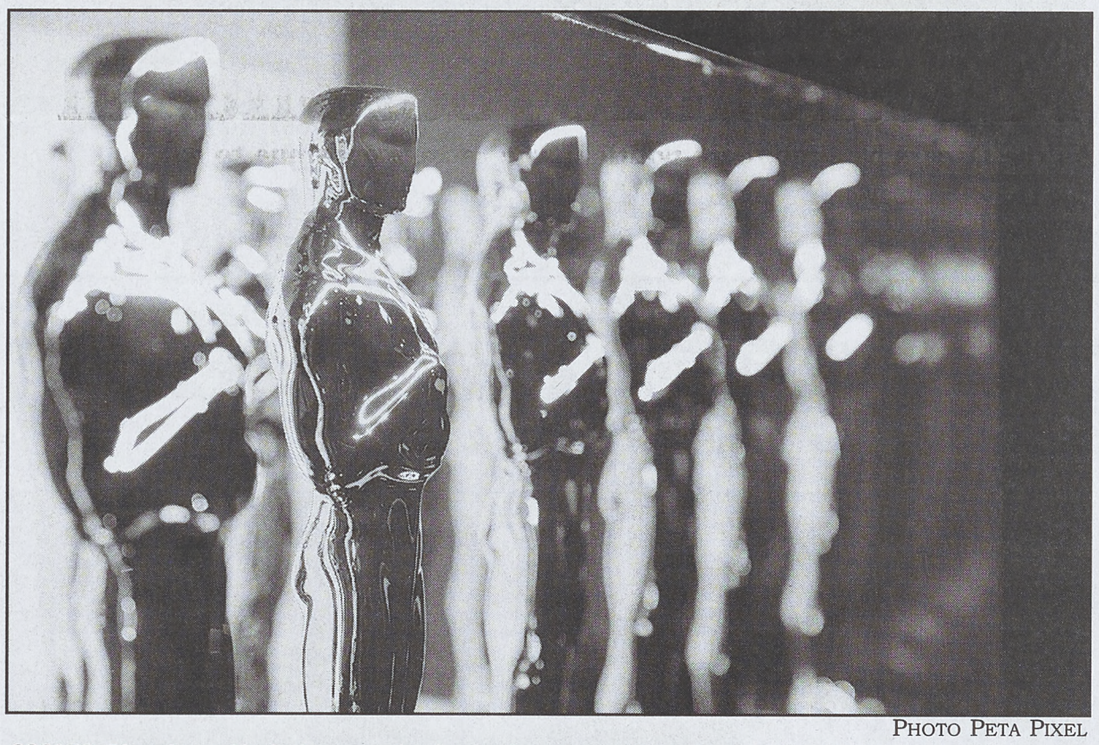


PHOTO PETA PIXEL

OSCARS- Diversity and inclusion were the dominating themes this year, as Hollywood begins to evolve.

BY GABRIEL ARIZON
STAFF WRITER

During its nearly four-hour run-time, the 90th Annual Academy Awards was quite a dry show leaving not much surprise in terms of who or what film won in each category. However, this was the first Oscars show since the numerous sexual harassment allegations against members of Hollywood arose and the #MeToo movement was birthed. As such, the 2018 Oscars looked to light a wave of inclusion, diversity, and empowerment within the film industry.

Kumail Nanjiani and Lupita Nyong'o, who came out to introduce the nominees for production design, made the most political statement of the night when they stated they stood by the Dreamers. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, has been threatened by President Trump and his move to end the program, leaving its recipients unsure if they will remain in the United States. As both of them are immigrants, Nanjiani and Nyong'o spoke about dreams being the foundation of Hollywood and of the United States.

"To all the dreamers out there, we stand with you," said Nanjiani to the audience and viewers watching at home.

While white actors dominated the actor and actress categories, there were several diverse winners who were accomplished in other categories. Jordan Peele made Oscar history by becoming the first black writer to win the award for Best Original Screenplay with "Get Out", "Coco" took home two awards for Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song, and Guillermo del Toro's film, "The Shape of Water," received 13 nominations and took home four awards, including Best Picture.

By the end of the night, it was clear that the main theme of the show was female empowerment. From a Time's Up speech given by Salma Hayek, Ashley Judd, and Annabella Sciorra, to the rousing speech given by Francis McDormand, it was clear that the industry would be different moving forward. Women will have more control over what roles they play and star in.

"Look around, ladies and gentlemen. We all have stories to tell and projects we need financed," said McDormand. "Invite us into your office in a couple of days, or you can come to ours, whichever suits you best, and we'll tell you all about them."

With diversity in awards and empowerment in film, a new Hollywood seems to be coming together with full support from the actors, actresses, and filmmakers alike.

Spring Fine Arts Festival seeks student submissions for event

Valleys Fine Arts Festival is taking submissions to bring students together.

BY SARAH BENNETT
STAFF WRITER

Students will soon have the opportunity to exhibit their passion for art in front of their peers and community in Valley College's Fine Arts Festival this Spring.

Sharing and promoting students art within the community is one of the main goals for Jocelyn Yang, the ASU fine arts commissioner, who believes that art should be shared outside of the classroom and in a more accessible setting than a museum. Not only can students exhibit their art but there is also a platform for singers and other artists to perform.

"I hope that others will come in and look at the art and performers and feel inspired to create something themselves," Yang said, "regardless of the role they play."

The Festival will be held at Monarch Hall on May 2 from 5-8 p.m. This is an open event to anyone at Valley, and the ASU is encouraging everyone to get involved. If students want to participate in the festival they can go to the ASU office located on the second floor, above the health center and cafeteria, to get a submission form. Students can also email Yang directly at asuart@lavc.edu.

"I just think that art should be shared with those around us," said Yang. "That's my motivation behind hosting the event, to promote and share creativity within the community."

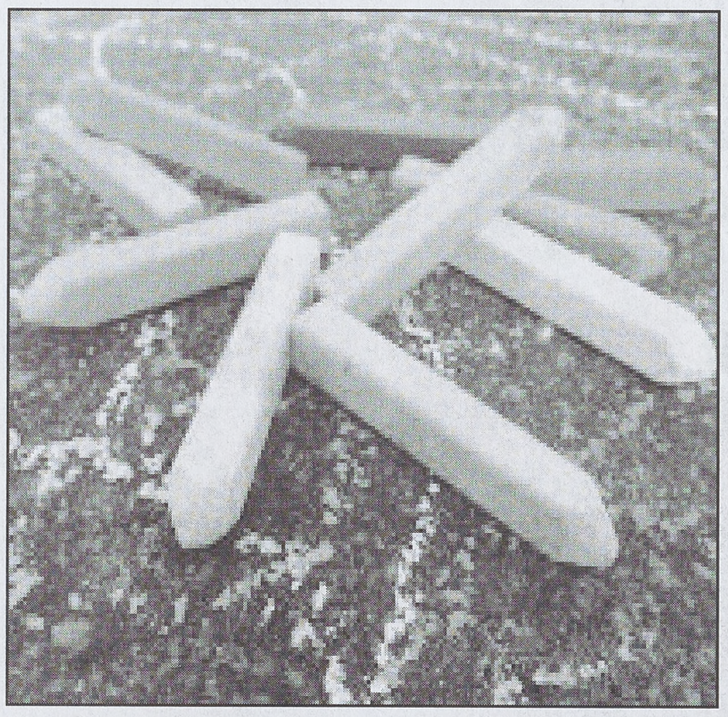


PHOTO BY PETA PIXEL

ART COMPETITION- Valley annonces its annual Spring Art Festival.

The Valley Star

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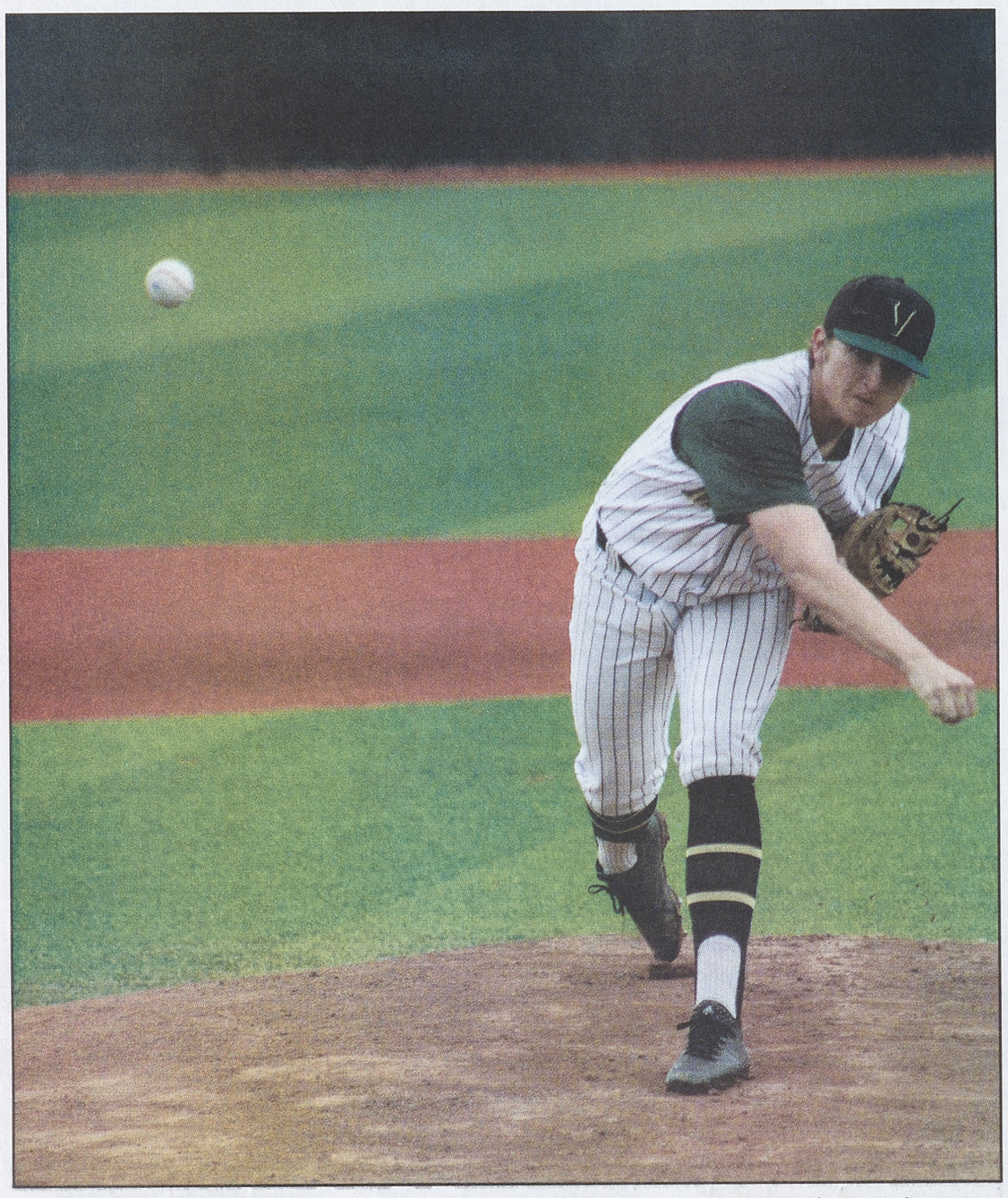
SPORTS

Monarch Baseball face uncertainty

The Valley Monarchs baseball early season woes place them at 8-12.



PHOTOGRAPHS/ APET SUKIASYAN

BY FREDY VEGA
STAFF WRITER

With the season well underway, what does the future hold for these Monarchs? Are these early-season struggles an indicator of things to come?

In a four-game stretch, where they went 2-2 winning against Rio Hondo, West LA, and losing to Pierce and LA Mission, the Monarchs are now 8-12 with the most recent win coming over Bakersfield 6-5.

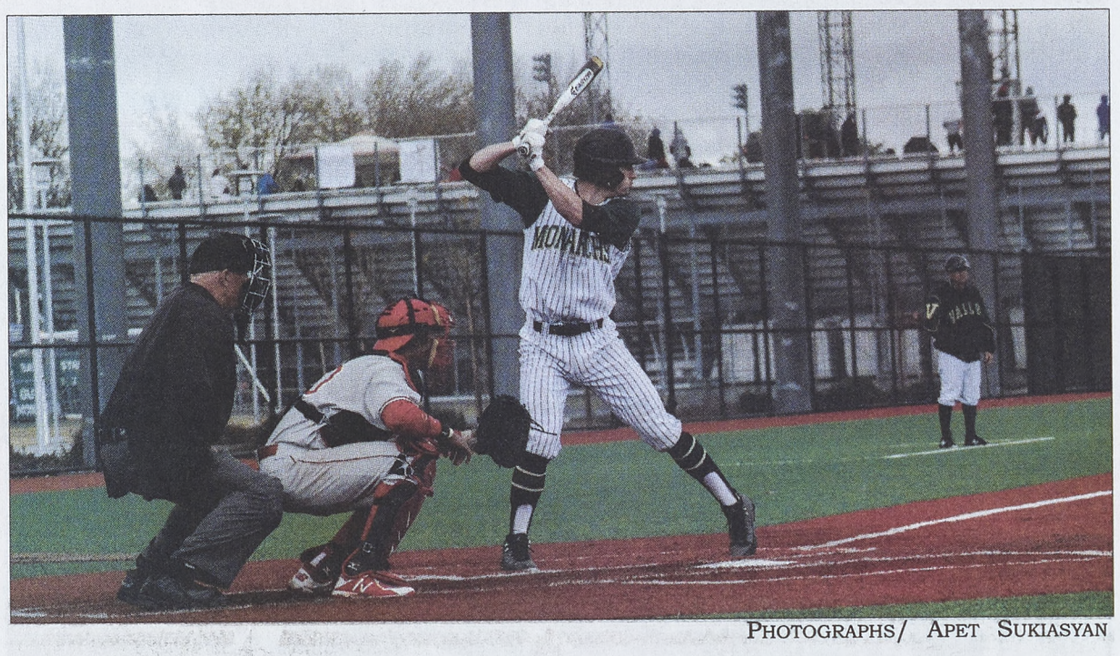
The team in the early parts of the season has been the emergence of players such as sophomore infielder Brock Bell and freshmen infielder Thomas Keller. Brock is batting a respectable .366 and Keller is not far behind with a .310 batting average, with a .450 on base percentage.

Stat of the Day: In their first 20 games, the Monarchs have been outscored 145-101.

The team has 99 runs batted in with a .269 batting average and .375 on-base percentage along with a .369 slugging average. Although their offensive prowess is admirable, they do struggle keeping their opponents under four-runs-per game.

Their best pitcher on deck is freshmen pitcher Giovanni Chaldez, holding a 1.38 ERA in 15 innings pitched with five appearances, while the team overall holds a lackluster 5.72 ERA.

The team has a long road ahead and a lot to prove. This next stretch has them on break until March 14th. Where they will then go head-to-head with rival Pierce in a three-game span, March 14 at home, March 17 at Pierce, and March 20th at home to finish off the series.



PHOTOGRAPHS/ APET SUKIASYAN

Moulton brings the heat for Valley

Hannah Moulton and the Lady Monarchs would grind out a victory over Glendale College, their 10th win of the season.

BY VICENTE VITELA
STAFF WRITER

The Lady Monarchs Softball team toughed out a 6-4 victory over Glendale College Vaqueros thanks to a complete-game performance by Hannah Moulton, her eighth of the season.

Moulton pitched three and two-third innings of no-hit softball for the Monarchs until a bloop single gave the Vaqueros their first hit. The game remained scoreless be locked heading into the bottom of the first until the Monarchs drew first blood off a Pam Garcia double to left, followed by a one-out RBI double to center by Sabrina Steward, her 25 of the season. Thanks to a wild pitch and three consecutive hits by the Monarchs, they held a 3-0 lead into the fourth.

"She had a good bullpen session and wanted the ball when it mattered," said Head Coach Greg Venger, talking about Moulton.

The top of the fourth would see the Monarchs make some defensive errors that Glendale capitalized on, leading to a two-run homerun by Stephanie Garner. It seemed as the momentum had shifted when the Monarchs were held scoreless in the bottom of the inning, but they returned the favor in the top of the fifth by not allowing a run, keeping the score knotted at 3.

"Were still inconsistent and I won't be satisfied until we make a routine play routine," Venger said.

In the fifth inning, the Monarchs took advantage of a leadoff error by the Vaqueros, and Ashley Acosta blasted a two-run double to left field, her 26th RBI of the season, pushing the lead back to three.

In the next half inning, Glendale collected a leadoff single that rattled Moulton, who walked the next three batters. However, timely 4-3 double play, helped the Monarchs end the inning.

"They are a lot better mentally and the culture has changed as it's become unacceptable to lose," said Venger.

The Monarchs would eventually hold on to get a 6-4 win, pushing their record to 10-5 and are 7-0 at home. Their next game will be a key conference matchup against Mission College.

PHOTOS BY DALE BECK